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BRITISH EMBASSY

ATHENS

2 July 1981

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J Jenkins Esq
Southern European Dept
FCO

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INDEX	ENTRY
	Action Taken

Dear John,

BALKAN COOPERATION: MEETING OF TRANSPORT EXPERTS,
SOFIA 15-19 JUNE

I am enclosing a self-explanatory note by the Ambassador on a Community briefing in Athens on the above meeting. I am also enclosing (for SED only) copies of the Bulgarian first draft and the final text of the resulting Protocol.

Yours ever,

L Parker

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L Parker

cc: Chanceries: SOFIA
BUCHAREST
BELGRADE
ANKARA
MOSCOW

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INTER-BALKAN COOPERATION: COMMUNITY BRIEFING ON THE MEETING OF
EXPERTS ON TRANSPORT HELD IN SOFIA FROM 15 TO 19 JUNE 1981

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1. Ambassador Papaioannou, Director-General for Economic Affairs at the MFA, gave us an account of the above meeting on 26 June. Stratis Stratigis, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Coordination, had nominally been the head of the Greek delegation but he had stayed for the opening day only. Papaioannou had remained throughout for what he clearly regarded as a rather wearisome meeting at which much time had been spent haggling over the text of the final protocol. The text eventually signed on 19 June is attached. Papaioannou also distributed (copy also attached) the text of the first draft submitted by the Bulgarians to illustrate how far the other delegations had succeeded in modifying it.
 2. Papaioannou opened by recalling that at the inter-Balkan meeting held at Ankara in the autumn of 1979 (at which he had been present) it had been agreed that there should be an expert meeting on communications - which everyone except the Bulgarians had interpreted as meaning telecommunications. The Bulgarians moreover had insisted that discussion should be confined to bilateral cooperation. Some of the governments represented at Ankara judged the meeting a fiasco but as the concept of Balkan cooperation stemmed from a Greek initiative associated personally with Karamanlis the Greeks had been reluctant to admit that multi-lateral cooperation even on technical subjects had proved futile. It was agreed that the next expert meeting should take place in Sofia and subsequently, when Karamanlis met President Zhivkov, the Greeks were surprised to find that the Bulgarians had changed their tack and were intent on organising a meeting for which "communications" was interpreted as meaning "transport". The Bulgarians spent a great deal of time and trouble preparing for their meeting, visiting capitals and agreeing the rules of procedure in advance. At this point the Greek Government came to suspect that the choice of transport as the theme for the Sofia meeting was related to Brezhnev's initiative for a Pan-European meeting on this subject. This suspicion was confirmed when the Bulgarians informed the other participants that an expert from the ECE Office in Geneva wished to attend as observer. The Romanians did not like this at all but in the event the Deputy Head of the ECE Office did attend. Papaioannou subsequently discovered from this observer, an Italian, that far from taking the initiative, the United Nations officials in Geneva had been put under a great deal of pressure by the Bulgarians and he had come to Sofia with the greatest reluctance.
 3. Throughout the meeting and in the negotiation of the protocol the Bulgarians made numerous and persistent efforts to link inter-Balkan and Pan-European cooperation but all the other delegations, especially the Romanians, resisted this. The

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The drafting sessions continued so long that the final plenary had to be postponed and, as a result and to the discomfiture of the Bulgarians, the ECE representative had to leave to catch his aircraft for Geneva without speaking.

4. Parallel to their efforts to promote the concept of Pan-European cooperation, the Bulgarians opposed - apparently successfully - any reference in the protocol or other conference documents to the continuity of inter-Balkan cooperation. They refused, for instance, to include any specific reference to previous meeting. They had however gone out of their way to flatter and cultivate the Greek delegation, making numerous references during the meeting to the excellent current state of bilateral relations and to the success of the recent meeting between Karamanlis and Zhivkov in Rhodes - a meeting which (as Papaioannou observed in parenthesis) had indeed been cordial but which had not achieved very much.

5. Papaioannou said that the Greek Government judged the Sofia meeting to have been at least a limited success. But what exactly was gained is not very clear. As follow-up there will be further meetings of experts as specified in the protocol. Papaioannou counted it a minor achievement that the level of participation has been higher than at previous similar meetings.

6. In deducing Bulgarian - and also Soviet - motives over this meeting, I imagine that, in addition to the desire to promote the Brezhnev proposal for a Pan-European conference referred to above, it is not irrelevant that the Bulgarians have been given a special role within the CMEA in the field of long-distance road transport. Papaioannou did not refer to the CMEA angle but mentioned that the visiting delegations had been much impressed by what they had been told of the 8,500 Bulgarian registered heavy vehicles which now traversed the motor routes of Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

7. The Romanians have proposed that the next inter-Balkan meeting, to be held in Bucharest, should consider questions of energy. Papaioannou did not appear to be particularly concerned that Brezhnev had also proposed a Pan-European conference on this subject.

I J M Sutherland

I J M Sutherland

1 July 1981

P R O T O C O L

of the meeting of experts from Balkan countries on questions of transport

/Sofia, 15 - 19 June 1981/

At the invitation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and in accordance with the agreement reached, a meeting was held in Sofia from 15th to 19th June 1981 of experts on transport from Balkan countries, to which participated delegations from the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic, the Socialist Republic of Romania, the Republic of Turkey and the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.

A representative of the Inland Transport Committee of the UN Economic Commission for Europe was also present at the meeting in the capacity of an observer.

On behalf of the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria the Minister of Transport Mr. Vassil Tzanov greeted the participants in the meeting.

At the first plenary session the agenda, the rules of procedure, and other ways of proceeding in the meeting were adopted with consensus. A list of the participants and the rules of procedure are herewith attached.

The delegations discussed in a friendly atmosphere different matters concerning the state and development of cooperation of mutual interest in the field of transport to the participating countries in the meeting.

The discussions were aimed at looking for solutions in important fields of transport such as:

- further development of international goods and passenger transportations through the territories of the Balkan countries;
- development and improvement of transport infrastructure;
- measures to be taken for facilitating international transportations.

The delegations of the participating countries underlined with satisfaction that the follow-ups of meetings and the frequent contacts between the Balkan countries held on all levels in the spirit of mutual understanding, friendship and good neighbourliness have also contributed to the development of the cooperation in the field of transport. Taking into account the evident importance of the territories of the Balkan countries to international transport it was noted that the favourable development of bilateral cooperation among the Balkan countries in this field during recent years has contributed to the development of economic and commercial international relations and contacts among the citizens of different countries.

Since certain problems concerning international transport cannot be effectively resolved only on a bilateral basis, the participants underlined the advantage of their multilateral cooperation in the spirit of which the present meeting in Sofia is held and which can be considered as a contribution to the security and to the development of cooperation in the Balkans and in Europe which is in conformity with the final Act of Helsinki and constitutes another concrete example for the implementation of these provisions.

The participating countries noted various meetings held among Balkan countries in concrete fields of matters of common interest and considered it useful to continue their efforts to organize similar meetings in the future.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ROAD
AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT THROUGH THE TERRITORIES
OF THE BALKAN COUNTRIES

The experts of the countries participating in the meeting indicated that they are facing problems of common interest in the field of transport and underlines the possibilities of further development of international goods and passenger transport through the territories of the Balkan countries. They agreed that there is a need to realize their cooperation on problems of common interest.

Agreement was reached for carrying out of analysis and prognosis of international goods and passenger transport through the territories of the Balkan countries for the period up to 1990 or 2000 aiming at a better use of the existing transport systems and for agreeing upon the measures to be taken for the development of the infrastructure.

In this connection they decided to hold meetings of experts from Balkan countries with the aim to make such analyses and prognoses as well as to propose measures which should be taken to meet the transport demands.

If necessary, assistance should be seekd from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

At the same time it was agreed that an exchange of information on transport policy of the various Balkan countries should be carried out.

The experts noted the usefulness of analysing the possibilities of developing combined transport and the use of containers on a basis of mutual advantage.

The representative of the countries participating in the meeting estimated it useful to develop the scientific and technical cooperation in the field of transport. To this end they deem it useful that representatives of their countries meet and agree upon the forms used and ways of developing such cooperation.

They consider it useful to establish contacts between the concerned transport organizations from the Balkan countries to exchange pertinent information and examine the possibilities to reach agreements in view of developing the cooperation under mutually advantageous conditions.

The experts considered the necessity to cooperate in improving road traffic safety through the territories of the Balkan countries and to examine the measures related thereof.

The representatives of the participating countries in the meeting noted that the above-mentioned action should be carried out by taking into account some factors relating to transport such as:

- energy and fuel consumption
- duration of transport
- improvement of transport conditions
- protection of the environment
- traffic safety
- mutual benefits and costs of international transport

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The experts considered it worth that in future a greater attention be given to the development of the infrastructure of railway, river road and combined transport, introduction of the use of containers and other new progressive technologies on the basis of modern achievements of the technical progress in this field.

They underlined that in future railway transport it to play an increasing role for transportation. The experts considered it expedient to strengthen the cooperation for the development of the international railway network in the Balkan region.

The experts recommended that Railway Administration of their countries study the possibility of introducing automatic coupling in the railway transport.

An important tendency in the improvement of transport infrastructure in the territories of the Balkan countries is the development and reconstruction of the cross border points as well as equipping them with modern equipment which would allow the application of advanced technologies, within their possibilities, for expediting the traffic and the opening of new ones, if necessary and justified by the traffic demands.

The experts are of the opinion that special attention should be paid to the improvement of water transport infrastructure connected with the increasing role of river and combined transport.

The experts underlined the importance of road transport and road development and recommended that pertinent studies be undertaken for the improvement of the road network of the Balkan countries.

The experts also underlined the need for the improvement and more efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure before any important project is undertaken.

Taking into account the considerable capital investments necessary for the improvement of transport infrastructure of international aspect in the territories of the Balkan countries, the experts stressed the importance of profound studies and exchange of information and data, as well as of technico-economic analysis in order to establish the form of the investments in this respect.

MEASURES FOR FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT

The meeting called the attention on matters concerning improvement and better use of the existing infrastructure for searching of more effective forms of transport organization and consequently recommends:

- that the competent authorities of the Balkan countries
- study the possibilities for perfection of the border, customs, sanitary and other operations in view of

shortening their duration, diminishing the stay of transport vehicles and increasing the traffic capacity of the border points;

- that transport organizations study, and if expedient, agree upon the measures aiming at the improvement of passenger transport among the Balkan countries;
- in view of facilitating journeys and encouraging private and group tourism, that the competent railway authorities of the Balkan countries study the possibilities and coordinate measures for the establishment of direct railway connections between the capitals and other big commercial and tourist centres of the Balkan countries.
- to study the possibilities concerning the promotion of technical and legal assistance, as well as fuel supplies and other services in international traffic among the Balkan countries;
- that the competent authorities ensure in due time advance and current information on the conditions and accessibility of the main international highways and other matters concerning traffic.
- in order to facilitate the movement of vehicles and the conditions of work of the drivers that the competent authorities of the countries study the possibility for drafting and issuing an atlas, consisting of road maps of the Balkan countries, the necessary information on the particularities of the legal and traffic regulations and specific customs and other formalities in the field of transport of the respective countries. The implementation of this task can be realized by one country taking the initiative and corresponding for this purpose with the other countries or by organizing a meeting of experts
- that the Railway Organizations of the Balkan countries study the possibility of applying new technologies in railway transport and introducing international express direct goods and container block-trains.

If one or more of the participating countries consider it necessary they may propose to examine the possibility of organizing meetings of experts to study certain concrete questions mentioned in this Protocol. Such meetings will be organized by diplomatic channels.

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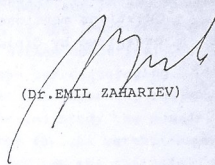
The delegations were received by the Minister of Transport of the People's Republic of Bulgaria Mr. Vassil Tzanov.

The representatives participating in the meeting visited different transport facilities in Varna.

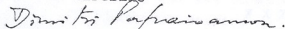
The meeting was held in a constructive spirit of mutual understanding, friendship and good neighbourliness.

The present Protocol is done in Sofia on 19th of June, 1981 in French and English, both texts being equally authentic.

HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

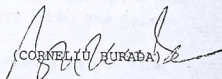

(Dr. EMIL ZAHARIEV)

HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE
HELLENIC REPUBLIC


(DIMITRI PAPAIOANNOU)

(STRATIS STRATIGIS)

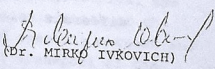
HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ROMANIA


(CORNELIU BURADA)

HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY


(YAVUZ GOR)

HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE
SOCIALIST FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC
OF YUGOSLAVIA


(Dr. MIRKO IVKOVICH)